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## Grants for employee training available

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Businesses need well-trained talent to handle ever-increasing competition. With that in mind, Finger Lakes Wired plans to make \$350,000 in scholarships available to companies in the nine-county region.

Businesses in industries such as advanced manufacturing, alternative energy, life sciences, business services, food and agriculture, engineering, optics and information technology may apply for up to \$10,000 in funding, Matthew Hurlbutt, managing director of the regional economic development agency, said Friday.

Employment training is critical to the vitality of the region, Hurlbutt said. "The talent really drives prosperity."

The new money follows a \$1.4 million grant in May that helped businesses in Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne and Wyoming counties to upgrade the skills of 2,326 employees. Orleans and Yates are the other counties covered by Finger Lakes Wired.

There has been an emphasis by employers on lifetime learning, said Rod Fortran, labor market analyst at the state Department of Labor in Albany.

"That trend is not going to go away," Fortran said. "Employers have been saying for years, 'We want a more educated work force.'"

To qualify for a grant, companies must accomplish one of several goals: develop management competencies, develop technical skills or implement productivity initiatives. Training must be completed by Jan. 31, 2008, and companies that previously received a grant aren't eligible.

Kevin Stell, manufacturing trainer at Ultrafab in Farmington, Ontario County, said the first round of training included 12 sessions at his company.

"These sessions involved training to almost everyone in our company, from the president on down to our newest employee," Stell said.

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### To learn more

For details on how to apply for a training grant,  
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[Back](#)

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